

## Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame

*To recognize the post-military achievements of veterans, Governor M. Jodi Rell this year created the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame. Each year ten Connecticut veterans who have honorably served their country in the Armed Forces and continued to serve and inspire through their lifetime contributions to the community will be inducted into this Hall of Fame.*

*So many of America's veterans continue to give to their communities, state and nation after honorable military service. The Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame seeks to recognize them for their countless contributions.*

*An Executive Committee has been established that will select the ten inductees from applications received across the state. While not a military hall of fame, the new Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame pays tribute to the professional and civic achievements of veterans. As a member of this committee, I urge anyone who would like to apply or nominate someone for this recognition in 2006 to contact my office.*



# State Senator Tony Guglielmo

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2005  
Legislative Report

# State Senator Tony Guglielmo

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# State Senator Tony Guglielmo

Senator Guglielmo with his grand-daughter, Lily, on Opening Day of Session

Dear Neighbor,

When the 2005 legislative session began there was a great deal of anticipation throughout the halls of the legislature due

to the fact that for the first time in over a decade Connecticut had a new Governor. If there was any doubt before the start of the session as to Governor M. Jodi Rell's ability to lead our state, she put those questions to rest immediately. Due to her leadership, the session ended on time without much partisan wrangling and that is exactly what Connecticut residents were looking for in a leader when she took office last year.

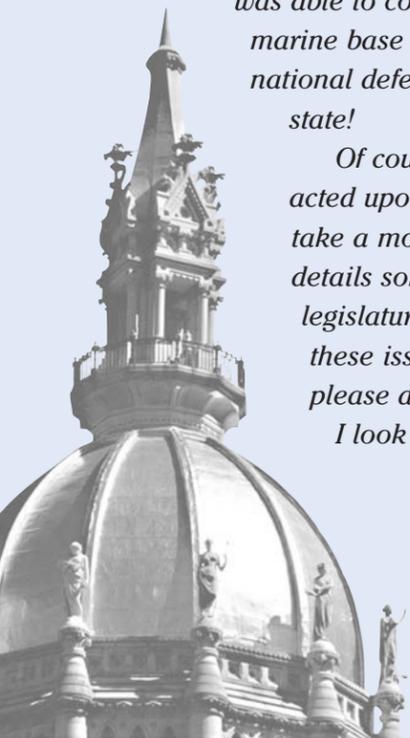
While the legislative session may be remembered as one of compromise, 2005 will be remembered for one thing - the saving of the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton. Through the efforts of our Governor, Connecticut's Congressional delegation, state legislators and residents from across the state, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) was able to conclude that a strong, strategically placed submarine base in Connecticut was in the best interest of our national defense. This is indeed great news for our entire state!

Of course there were many other matters that were acted upon by the General Assembly this year. Please take a moment to read my annual legislative report that details some of the bigger issues that came before the legislature in 2005. If you have any questions regarding these issues or any issue that may be of concern to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at 1-800-842-1421.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

State Senator  
35th District



## Budget & Taxes

If there was any good news surrounding the state budget process this year, it was the fact that a new two-year state budget was adopted before the start of the new fiscal year. Unfortunately, what was in the budget could have a detrimental effect on our state's economy for years to come. The new \$31.2 billion biennial state budget creates \$1.2 billion in new spending, including the irresponsible use of one-time revenues which will create a greater burden on future budgets. This year alone spending will increase 8.8%. When you consider that since the income tax and spending cap were enacted in 1991, budget increases have averaged 5%, this is indeed very troubling in that it practically ignores the constitutional spending cap that voters overwhelmingly adopted in 1992.

The budget also increases taxes by approximately \$355 million, including a 6% gross receipts tax on nursing homes and a 20% corporate surcharge in 2006 and 15% surcharge in 2007. Additionally, the budget creates a new estate tax on certain estates, retroactive to January 1, 2005. At a time when the state is in need of fiscal restraint, this budget does just the opposite and was not worthy of my support.

## Campaign Finance Reform

One of the most publicized issues before the legislature in 2005 was the hot button issue of campaign finance reform. The state of Connecticut currently has some of the toughest election laws in the nation, but the recent controversy surrounding our former governor has put a greater focus on campaign contributions.

I have never believed that taxpayer financed campaigns as a method of reform was a very good idea. It doesn't seem fair that someone's tax money should go to a candidate they might not agree with. What's more, the demise of former Governor Rowland centered on contributions from lobbyists and other interest groups. That is why I have been a strong supporter of placing greater campaign spending limits on those who have the greatest financial influence and those who have abused the system in the past, namely, Political Action Committees (PACs) and lobbyists. I, along with my fellow Republican colleagues in the Senate, offered a compromise that would have instituted a publicly financed campaign system in return for bans on contributions from PACs and lobbyists. The majority party scuttled this measure and while a task force was created to form an accord, the issue remains unresolved.

## Environment

Northeastern Connecticut is known as Connecticut's "quiet corner" due to its vast amount of open space. Upon taking office last year, Governor Rell made open space preservation a priority of her administration. This year the legislature passed legislation that allows the commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection to enter into joint ownership agreements with nonprofit organizations to acquire the development rights to qualified agricultural land if the nonprofit's mission is the permanent protection of agricultural land for continued agricultural use.



## Protecting Against Identity Theft

Personal identity theft is a growing problem throughout the nation. This year the legislature passed a measure that allows a consumer to freeze their credit reports and requires businesses to inform consumers if their computerized personal information has been breached. Victims and potential victims of such crimes need to be notified immediately that their personal information may have been compromised. For information on how to protect yourself from identity theft, please visit the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft/](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/) or contact my office.



## Gift Cards

Did you know that prior to this year any gift card or certificate purchased in Connecticut not used within three years was considered unclaimed property and its value given to the state? In fact, businesses whose responsibility it was to make sure the value of all unused gift cards was turned over to the state were losing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Thanks to a new law this practice has been done away with. Now consumers and businesses can be assured that gift cards can be bought and used at any time, whether it's five days, five weeks or five years from the date of its purchase.

## Eminent Domain

Like many residents throughout Connecticut (and the nation), I was stunned when the U.S. Supreme Court earlier this year ruled that eminent domain laws could be used for purposes of economic development. This decision could have a monumental impact on homeowners everywhere in that it allows any city or town to take individual homes away from people and turn them over to private developers as long as the government does it in the name of the "public good." Expanding our eminent domain laws so that private developers can make more money is a very disturbing and dangerous proposition and walks all over the basic right of every American to own property.

The good news is that this ruling is not binding and allows each state to determine how best to enforce its eminent domain laws. Earlier this summer the legislature had an opportunity to enact legislation that would have prohibited the seizure of homes for economic development. Unfortunately, the measure failed because legislative leaders wanted to take more time to "study" the issue. I don't believe we need any more studies to determine that this practice is wrong.